

CSIR at 85 A Journey of Science, People and Purpose

IN September 2026, CSIR enters, in its 85th year, and I find myself thinking less about a number and more about its legacy — a journey that has unfolded alongside the story of modern India.

CSIR came into existence in 1942, and this was the year when the country was still on the threshold of independence. Over the decades that followed, CSIR grew with the nation. Ever since, CSIR has been responding to changing needs and expanding into new areas of science and technology. Today, its network of laboratories reflects an extraordinary breadth of scientific capability that covers areas ranging from biological and chemical sciences to engineering, materials, earth sciences, environmental research and many emerging fields.

Having been associated with CSIR for many years, I have had the opportunity to see this organisation from different perspectives. Each role has offered a different view of CSIR, but one thing has remained constant throughout the years: “The sense of purpose that runs through its laboratories and its people”.

Institutions evolve with time, and CSIR has evolved considerably. The questions that scientists are asking today are different from those of earlier decades, as are the tools, collaborations and expectations surrounding research. Yet the basic purpose of CSIR — to use scientific knowledge and research capabilities for the benefit of the country, and this continues to provide a strong foundation.

For me, one of the most interesting aspects of CSIR has always been its diversity. Every CSIR laboratory has its own identity with a specific focus area, expertise, and history. Together, they form a scientific and technological ecosystem — a pool of knowledge and experience over generations.

I proudly say that I have spent a considerable part of my professional life within the CSIR family. And during this period, I came across several stories and achievements from these laboratories, narrating how science progresses with the changing times. This legacy is built on patience, persistence and the collective efforts of one generation building on the work of other generations. In many ways, this continuity makes the journey of CSIR so impactful and interesting. The 85th year is an appropriate moment to have a look both backwards and forwards.

Celebrating the CSIR journey, the September 2026 issue of *Science Reporter* dedicates a special focus to the CSIR at 85. This issue includes a message from our Hon’ble Director General, CSIR, and Secretary, DSIR, Dr N Kalaiselvi. The message sets the tone for this milestone, reflecting on the remarkable evolution of CSIR since 1942 and its contributions to the service of the nation. The issue takes readers through CSIR’s evolution and showcases 85 impactful technologies. These technologies highlight how research has been enhanced beyond the boundaries of laboratories. It also looks at how CSIR innovations are contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby strengthening self-reliance, creating livelihoods and addressing challenges. Besides, there are several other engaging stories as well, including broad-spectrum snake antivenoms, the secret life of dengue mosquitoes, the biodiversity represented by an Oriental Pied Hornbill and a Blue Rock Pigeon and many other interesting stories. Enjoy Reading!

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